

VERPLANCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Be Safe
Be Responsible
Be Respectful

2012 - 2013

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Office: 647-3383

Absence: 647-3383

Fax: 647-5029

Non-discrimination Statement

Manchester Public Schools is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. Manchester Public Schools does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disability, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Manchester Public Schools does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Inquiries regarding Manchester Public School's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

Terri Smith, Human Resources Specialist/
School
Title IX Coordinator
Manchester Public Schools
45 North School Street
Manchester, CT 06042
860-647-3595

Shelly Matfess, Director of Pupil
Personnel Services
Section 504 Co-Coordinator
Manchester Public Schools
45 North School Street
Manchester, CT 06042
860-647-3452

Suzanne Valade, Coordinator of
Health Services
Section 504 Co-Coordinator
Manchester Public Schools
45 North School Street
Manchester, CT 06042
860-647-3324

Title IX Notice

Title IX is a federal law which states: "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal assistance." Manchester's Title IX coordinator is: Terri Smith, address and phone number listed above.

Student Safety and Security Measures

At times, it is necessary for the administration to take extra measures to ensure the safety of our students and employees. The administration may do this periodically with no advanced notice. Some of these measures include using police directed sniffer dogs, and the use of breathalyzers and metal detector wands. These measures are simply additional administrative tools to ensure safety and compliance with the law in our schools without intruding into the legitimate privacy interests of students. Connecticut and federal laws, and Board policy #5145.2 (Search and Seizure) allow school administrators to implement any of these procedures.

Welcome to Verplanck Elementary School!

The Verplanck teachers, staff and principal are committed providing a safe, caring community where all children and families are respected. We are also committed to providing all of our students the opportunity to learn a challenging curriculum which will help make them career and college ready as well as active life-long learners.

Families share the responsibility with us of providing the best possible education for all Verplanck students. Your input and involvement is appreciated and will truly make a positive difference in your child's education.

Important Contact Information

Address: 126 Olcott Street

Office: 860-647-3383 Mr. Jones, Principal
Mrs. Sickman, Secretary

Nurse: 860-647-3385 Mrs. Guntulis

Social Worker: 860-647-3389 Mr. Reynolds

Library: 860-647-3387 Mrs. Pepin

Cafeteria: 860-647-3388 Mrs. Barbieri

Absence Phone: 860-647-3383 (call in your child's absence beginning at 7:00 a.m.)

Verplanck Website: verplanck.townofmanchester.org

Manchester Public Schools Website: boe.townofmanchester.org

School Hours for a Regular School Day: 9:05 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

8:35 a.m. Only Breakfast students may enter the building

8:50 a.m. All students may enter the building

9:05 a.m. Late Bell – The school day begins

3:25 p.m. Dismissal – Parents should not take their students out of school early on a regular basis. This should be done rarely and only when necessary.

Shortened School Day (Grades K-5)

8:50 AM - First Bell

9:05 AM - School begins – late bell

1:17 PM - Dismissal (lunch will be served)

Delayed Openings – 90 minute delay

10:20 AM – First Bell

10:35 AM session begins

Grades K-5 from 10:35 AM to 3:25 PM (lunch is served)

All morning meetings, PPT, CST, meetings with teachers, band and orchestra, etc. will be canceled.

Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports

Verplanck Elementary School has an active Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports Program. This program is built upon the tenets that every member of the Verplanck Elementary School Community will strive to:

Be Safe
Be Respectful
Be Responsible

The students will be taught and reminded what being safe, respectful and responsible will look like in the many different areas of the school such as the classroom, cafeteria, playground, bathroom, school assemblies, and the bus.

Parent-Teacher Association

PTA is a vital link between the school, community and the parents it serves. Parents are urged to join and take an active part in the PTA. The PTA plans several events in conjunction with the school. The following events are generally scheduled during the following months:

Wednesday September 10th – Open House 5:30 p.m.

September – Family BBQ with UCONN student athletes 5:30

October – Pasta Dinner and Book Fair 6:00 p.m.

April - Ice Cream Social, Book Fair & Endangered Species Night 6:00 p.m.

School Governance Council

The success of the school and the students it serves is the shared responsibility of the school staff, parents or legal guardians and community members. School Governance Councils are the primary, local school decision-making body of a school devoted to achieve its mission and vision.

Parent Conferences

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school members. Conferences are held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate the parent schedules.

Parent Involvement/Communications

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. Parents/Guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/Guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Cafeteria Program | Prices: Breakfast | \$1.00 |
| | Hot lunch | \$1.85 |

These prices are subject to change at any time throughout the year.

Cafeteria Behavior Policy – Grades K-5

Appropriate behavior and proper manners are expected at all times in the cafeteria. Rules and expectations are clear to students. Students are encouraged to use “quiet voices” in order to control the noise level in the cafeteria.

Individual student minor infractions are handled in the following ways:

- a. speak to the child and remind him/her of behavior policy
- b. assign the child to another table

Major infractions such as:

- a. throwing food
- b. fighting
- c. abusive language
- d. obscene gestures

will be dealt with immediately in the office. A student may lose the privilege of eating in the cafeteria for one to five days. Further episodes of uncooperative behavior will result in more serious disciplinary actions.

Parents are encouraged to support the policy when their child is involved in an altercation. Our intent is to maintain a safe environment so that all students will have a pleasant lunch.

Students may pay cash on a daily basis in the lunch line or pre-pay for lunch.

If a student forgets his/her lunch, a lunch will be provided and the parent/guardian will be charged.

SCHOOL LUNCH ACCOUNTS_ 5143.2

It is the policy of the Manchester Public Schools to allow students to charge meals when the student does not have cash available or there is no money left in the student’s mealtime account at schools operating under the Traditional School Meal Program. Full priced or reduced priced elementary students will be allowed to charge three meals. Students owing three meals will no longer be allowed to charge meals; these students will be provided with an alternative meal. The alternative meal will consist of a cheese sandwich or peanut butter and jelly sandwich, fruit/vegetable, and milk.

Full priced or reduced priced middle and high school students will be allowed to charge three meals. Students owing three meals will no longer be allowed to charge meals; these students will be provided with an alternative meal for two consecutive days. The alternative meal will consist of a cheese sandwich or peanut butter and jelly sandwich, fruit/vegetable, and milk.

Alternative meals are designed for and served to students who do not have cash or funds in their mealtime account. Every effort will be made to let the student know when funds within an account are low. In addition, notification will be sent to the parent or guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to monitor account status for their students. Parents or guardians can monitor their student’s mealtime account by utilizing the online payment system at www.ezschoolpay.com.

If parents or guardians need more information regarding the use of the online payment system, they can reach Nutritional Services at (860) 647-3461.

District policy states that, the parent or guardian of the student receiving alternative meals will be expected to pay the cost for all alternative meals served.

Adopted: January 25, 2010

Dress Code

Student dress may be regulated and students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive or contrary to law.

Any school dress which impairs safety or increases the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanness, malodorousness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains unreasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited.

Students' overall appearance should fall within the generally accepted definitions of neatness and cleanliness. Generally, the students are expected to dress and groom themselves for the business of school so as to neither distract other students or teachers, disrupt the educational process, or pose a health or safety threat to anyone. Clothing should be clean, untorn, free from promotion of or reference to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, and offensive signs, symbols or words. Clothing should also be free of slogans, names, titles or the like which are defamatory toward person(s), group(s), the school or other organizations or which are likely to incite or inflame. Students whose dress or grooming is judged by the staff to be distracting, disruptive, or dangerous to personal safety will be subject to administrative action.

Students **should not wear** the following:

1. black soled shoes, boots or sneakers which mark the floor.
2. "see through" styles and/or mesh style shirts, blouses or midriff tops.
3. flip flops or thong style sandals.
4. underwear worn as outerwear.
5. jackets, coats, or boots normally worn as outerwear.
6. hats or caps, except those worn pursuant to established religious custom.
7. short shorts, athletic shorts, and cut offs.
8. shorts will be permitted as long as they are of mid-thigh length and of appropriate fit.

Lost and Found

Any articles which are found in the school or on school grounds should be turned in at the main office. Unclaimed articles will be disposed of at the end of the school year. Loss or suspected theft of personal or school property should be reported to the main office.

Field Trips

As part of the educational program, field trips are taken to various points of interest. Such trips are carefully planned by the teacher and supplement closely the curriculum at the grade level. Trips are supervised by teachers and chaperones. Children taking field trips are required to have permission slips signed by their parents or guardians. A cell telephone is available during field trips.

Fire Drills and Lockdown Drills

Fire drills are held monthly to prepare all students and teachers to leave the building as quickly as possible should any possible emergency arise. ABSOLUTE SILENCE is to be maintained at all times in leaving or entering the building to prevent confusion. Teachers will guide their students out of the building according to a plan that has been developed. Pupils must proceed in orderly lines, and after moving a safe distance from the building, turn and face the school. During a fire drill all pupils and personnel must leave the building. At least three Lockdown drills will take place during the school year.

Health

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES - Medication will be given by the school nurse or school personnel only in compliance with Public Act 723. DO NOT SEND MEDICATION TO SCHOOL WITH CHILDREN. Parents/guardians are responsible for bringing medications to and from school.

Absolutely no medications will be given for any reason without the doctor's order and note signed by him/her. This is a state law which must be strictly enforced.

If your child must take medication at school, bring the doctor's permission slip with an explanation. Label all medications with:

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| child's name | times to be taken |
| name of prescription | reason for taking |

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES - The spread of any communicable diseases can be kept to a minimum through the combined cooperation of parents, teachers and nurses. The parent and teacher must be alert to the following symptoms:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| rash on face or body | unusual pallor | coughing |
| sore throat | fever | impetigo |
| earache | nausea/vomiting | ringworm |
| red or discharging eyes | pain | nits and lice |
| headache with fever | flushed face | scabies |

When school personnel determine that an outbreak of a particular communicable disease is significant we will inform parents. If a child is kept at home because of illness, parents should notify the office immediately if the illness is diagnosed as communicable.

State statutes mandate a child cannot be admitted into a school system without proper health/immunization records. It is required that each child be immunized against measles, rubella, mumps, Hib, hepatitis-B (series of 3), poliomyelitis (series of 3) and diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (series of 4) and screened for T.B. For complete protection it is recommended that each child receive DTP plus polio boosters after the fourth birthday. If the above immunizations are restricted due to medical reasons, a physician's statement is necessary.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION - It is necessary to have a physical examination within the year before entry. School entrance may be denied unless examination records or immunization records are complete.

Pesticide Application

By July 1, 2000, only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or school grounds. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their children's school assignment area may contact the principal.

Media Release Form

The Manchester Public Schools may, from time to time, wish to recognize and showcase student work and achievement. In order to accomplish this, information identifying the student by photograph, name, age, grade, school, or school activity may be published. Individuals or groups of students may be showcased through the publication or display of student work such as writing, artwork, multimedia projects, photographs, videos, voice recordings, and descriptions of student accomplishments. A Media Release Form will be provided at the beginning of the school year. Please fill out the Media Release form (giving permission or not giving permission) before October 1st.

Playscape / Playground






The educational philosophy at Verplanck Elementary School is to educate the whole child. Keeping this philosophy in mind we are concerned about the physical well being of the students who attend our school. The playscape provides the opportunity for our students to develop their physical creativity in an atmosphere that is comfortable and safe. It encourages individuality by allowing students to play within their own physical abilities and talents.

The playscape is large enough for many children to be on it at one time. Children are encouraged to play cooperatively with one another. Social interaction through group play is promoted. The largeness of the structure also allows students to develop in a number of ways--an increase in strength and agility, body awareness in space, and attainment of a higher level of fitness.










The Verplanck Elementary School playscape has been designed for use by all students in the school. It is a place where children are free to explore different movement patterns on individual pieces of equipment and to play creatively.

I. Playground Rules for Students

Students may:

-  use equipment for his/her grade in the right way
-  play organized games or activities with the right rules
-  go to adults for help
-  play in the snow with boots
-  play in view of teachers and paraprofessionals

Students may not:

-  misuse equipment or use equipment meant for other grade levels
-  play roughly or hurt other youngsters
-  say unkind things, be disrespectful or tease others
-  swear
-  throw sticks, sand, rocks or snow
-  cut in line
-  play in puddles, on ice, snowbanks or dangerous areas
-  play in the woods out of view of adults
-  be in front of the building

Coats, jackets and or sweaters must be kept on, around the waist, or be carried.

Usage of the playground or playscape during school hours by persons other than school personnel is prohibited.

Student Records

We support the need for school records for each pupil that will reflect the academic, physical, emotional and social development of the pupil. For this reason, a cumulative record is maintained for each pupil from his/her entrance to school. The schools use these records only for the benefit of the pupil. Manchester student records are further governed by regulations which bring them into total compliance with federal and state legislation.

Under these regulations, parents and pupils have a right to expect that all student records will reflect respect for the individual's privacy and security. Subjective judgments or unverified data are not placed in the cumulative record. Either parent or legal guardian of a minor student or students eighteen (18) years-of-age and over shall, upon written request to the Board of Education and within forty-five (45) days, be entitled to knowledge of and access to all educational, medical, or similar records maintained in such student's cumulative record except that no parent or legal guardian shall be entitled to information considered privileged under Section 10-154a of the Connecticut General Statutes. (P.A. 84-42 - An Act Concerning Access to Data of Minors).

The written consent of one parent or guardian shall be required each time and for each item in the student's record divulged to any person except certified professional personnel employed by the Manchester Board of Education and having direct educational contact with the student.

Any research involving student records shall be subject to the provisions of this policy, and the accompanying regulations. Any reports or publications based on such research shall not contain the names of individual students.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS - Under the federal legislation of "Privacy Rights of Parents and Students" an eligible student or a parent of a student under 18 years-of-age is entitled to inspect and view any personal educational records the Manchester Public Schools may have on the student. Students of any age involved in a post-secondary educational program are also considered eligible students.

For those students under the age of 18 years, it is the parent of the student who possesses the right to inspect educational records. The term educational records refers to any information which directly relates to the student and is maintained by the Manchester Public Schools. This includes, but is not limited to:

- A. certain personally identifiable information.
- B. academic test records.
- C. educationally oriented diagnostic reports.
- D. teacher Progress Report information.
- E. pupil Planning and Placement Team minutes.
- F. attendance information.

Safety

The following rules have been designed for the security of your children and for the effectiveness of our school's learning environment. We ask that all adults comply.

1. All doors will be locked after 9:05 a.m. when school formally begins. Anyone coming to Verplanck after 9:05 a.m. will need to use the main entrance.
2. Sign in at the main office and obtain a Visitor's Pass if you are a visitor. The faculty and administration want to be able to identify any adult as either a volunteer or a visitor by the badges they wear. If you are not wearing a badge, you will be asked if you need assistance. This is another way we, at Verplanck, work to ensure that we have a secure school.
3. As soon as the buses are unloaded, our teachers begin organizing the children for their instructional day and processing the notices, money and homework. Teachers are also extremely busy at dismissal time. We request that parents do not go directly to classrooms between 8:50 a.m. and 3:25 p.m. unless you are expected by the teacher, have signed in at the office and are wearing a badge marked volunteer or visitor. Leaving a note in the office for the teacher or sending a note in with your child to have the teacher call you are preferred options. We feel that this procedure is essential to ensure school safety.
4. Parents are asked not to park in the circular drive any time during the school day as this is a restricted zone for school buses and emergency vehicles.

The administration, faculty and staff at Verplanck Elementary School are extremely appreciative of your consideration in following our procedures.

Textbook Care

Students are responsible for the care of all schoolbooks and supplies. Students must replace damaged or lost schoolbooks and supplies. In accordance with state law, the school will withhold records, transcripts and report cards until all lost or damaged school items are replaced.

Testing

All students in grades 3 through 8 and in grade 10 will participate in the CMT and CAPT programs. Special education students participate in the CMT and CAPT programs except in the rare case when participation in an alternate assessment is detrimental to the student's PPT. The graduating class of MHS, must meet district standards for graduation, in addition to required course credits. The CAPT test is one of the measures to be used to determine if students have met the identified standards. Student scores on each component of the CAPT may/shall be included on transcripts and permanent records. Students attending a district school identified under the No Child Left Behind Act for improvement, corrective action or restructuring may, as required by law, may transfer to another district school and/or receive supplementary educational services at district expense in compliance with federal legislation.

Policies

All district policies are available on line from the Manchester Board of Education site, or a hardcopy may be requested from the Verplanck main office.

Attendance/Ttruancy

In Accordance with Connecticut Sate Law (Statute 10-184) we are hereby providing written notice to you, as parents or guardians, of your obligation to assure your child's attendance at school.

Manchester Public School attendance policy states that the only excused absences are those due to illness of the student, death in the family, a doctor or dentist's appointment, religious obligations, or whenever the administration considers that exemption from attendance is in the best interest of the student. Parents are urged to schedule family vacations and appointments in accordance with the school calendar.

According to state law, Manchester Public Schools are required to address student attendance issues. We must determine whether each student absence is excused or unexcused. Therefore, we require parents to call by phone on each day the child is absent. When the child returns to school, he or she should bring a note explaining the reason for the absence.

In situations of excessive absenteeism, we will need to take further measures to determine whether the absences should be excused or unexcused. In cases of chronic illness, we will look to a medical authority for clarification of the legitimacy of the absence and assistance in working to improve the child's school attendance. If it is determined that absenteeism is excessive, parents will be informed that any further absence will require a doctor's note or phone call to the school nurse. If a doctor's note or call is not received, the absence will be considered unexcused.

Absences that are unexcused are defined by law as truanancies, and excessive truanancies must be referred to juvenile court.

Manchester Public Schools recognize the importance of early intervention for students with attendance issues. We firmly believe that school attendance impacts school performance. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the school or the Attendance Office (647-5028).

Truancy Board

When attendance, whether excused or unexcused absences and/or tardiness, does not improve, the families and students are referred to a community based Truancy Board. This community-based team includes representatives from the Department of Children and Families, Juvenile Court Probation, Manchester Police Department, Manchester Youth Services Bureau, Manchester Public School Police School Liaison Office, Manchester Public Schools Attendance Office, and the student's school. The Truancy Board summons parents and students to meet and discuss all their attendance issues and to develop a contract to attend school regularly. This contract may also include referrals to other school or community services. When the parent and/or the student refuses to agree on a contract or does not show up for Truancy Board, they are then automatically referred to Juvenile Court and/or to DCF. The Truancy Board is the final attempt by the school system to help truant students **before** they have to be referred to Juvenile Court.

Leaving School Grounds/Release of Student from School

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student's parent or guardian. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school. Arrangements should be made with the building administrator on the parent or guardian to pick up the student in the school office.

If someone other than a parent/guardian picks up the student, the person appearing in the school office should bring a note of identification from the parent or guardian.

STUDENTS ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE 5131.81

- I. Students may possess any electronic communication devices that have not been expressly prohibited below including cellular telephones, Blackberries, computers with modems, personal digital assistants, radios, walkie-talkies, walkman, MP3 players, CD players, their accessories (e.g. ear phones/buds) or other similar electronic devices; but may only use such devices pursuant to the following restrictions:
 - A. During the school day, electronic communication devices must be turned off so that they are incapable of being used.
 - B. During the school day, electronic communication devices must be stored out of sight in lockers, back-packs, bags, purses, or pockets. Electronic communication devices that are not stored out of sight during the school day are subject to confiscation, unless specific permission for use has been given by the principal or the principal's designee.
 - C. Before or after the school day and on weekends, students may use electronic communication devices on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities off school grounds except when there is a reasonable expectation of quiet attentiveness, when use of the device would cause any disruption, compromise law, order, and safety, or when so directed by the school administrator, staff member, or sponsor.
- II. Possession of electronic communication devices by students is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by this policy; or otherwise misuses this privilege. Failure to abide by this policy or other misuse of this privilege shall result in confiscation of the electronic communication device and may result in further disciplinary action.
- III. The student who possesses an electronic communication device is responsible for its care. The Board is not responsible for preventing theft, loss, damage, or vandalism to electronic communication devices brought onto its property. In addition, school staff may confiscate an electronic communication device brought to school or to a school sponsored activity based on a reasonable belief the student has used the device in a manner that violates this policy, any other school policy or state or federal law.
- IV. Students are prohibited from bringing the following electronic devices ("prohibited electronic devices") to school or a school sponsored activity without the prior written consent of the principal or the principal's designee: paging devices/beepers, portable police scanning devices and portable games or toys that transmit a signal more than 20 feet or through walls.
- V. The Administration shall establish regulation and procedures to implement this policy.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-233j Student possession and use of telecommunications devices

Policy adopted: January 11, 2010